



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## “THE JEW THAT MARLOWE DREW”

The relation of the playwright with the playgoers must ever be close, since the audience as a whole condition the dramatic poet, and explain him.—*Professor Brander Matthews.*

### I.

“I am glad,” said Mr. Andrew Lang some years ago, “that I never saw *The Merchant of Venice* acted, and that on my delight of it nothing that is of the stage stage can intrude.” There cannot of course be any question that Mr. Lang’s delight of the comedy is somewhat different from what it would be had he seen it performed sometime in a theatre. Since the visualization of plays in manuscript is a feat so difficult that experts confess to being baffled more often than not in giving their definitive judgments, it is obvious enough that in considering any of Shakespeare’s plays as dramas-of-the-closet, so-called, their primal quality, the reason for their being, will remain for the reader behind closed shutters. In restricting to the study the appreciation of a dramatic piece, whatever the imagined gain may be, there are certain both beauties and blemishes that must be to the book-man irreparably lost.

As every successful playwright always must be,—and as Milton, for illustration, essentially was not,—Shakespeare was a child of his time. It is impossible rightly to judge of his work without a fairly comprehensive understanding of the public he addressed. In seeing one of his dramas to-day, it is not sufficient for the student of dramaturgy merely to view the impression of the play, in its modern setting, on modern spectators; he must also bring to bear upon his consideration of the piece the fact that to the theatre-goers of over three centuries ago it made a somewhat different appeal. He perceives then that it is nothing against the fame of the author of *As You Like It* and *King Lear* to have passed through the sanguinary turgescence of *Titus Andronicus* and the euphuistic unreality of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Even *Hamlet*, which Professor Brander Matthews once designated “outwardly a mere tragedy-of-blood,” owes much, if not most, of its

perennial stage success to its conventional and traditional ghost, clowns, processions, combats, madness (real and feigned), play within the play, poisoning and final carnality; while many of the intrinsic beauties which we to-day see in the drama were not even dreamt of by the theatre-goers for which it was designed.

Had they been consistent in their panegyrics, the old-time Shakespearean encomiasts would have found many things in the poet's most deservedly popular plays that to their criteria were not as they should be; many stage effects (horse-play, spectacle, military encounter, and so on) that were projected to glut the eyes of the crowd. Such effects,—excellent in their way,—one need not very sedulously search for in the scenes of *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *King Richard the Third*, or *Julius Cæsar*. Shakespeareolaters (two years since, in one of our leading magazines, a university professor had the temerity to call the poet a "thoroughly human Man" [*sic*]) seem never able to retain in their memories the truism that the master craftsman of *Othello* and *The Tempest* is responsible also for *Cymbeline* and *Troilus and Cressida*; that he wrote to please the crass populace before he wrote to please himself, and that the real wonder is that his worst parts, from our point of view, are not worse than they are.

These lovers presumably do not read *Titus Andronicus*; it is so simple a matter to prove that Shakespeare composed, if any portion, only the better part of this concerto in horror; as also, the brutal brothel-scenes in the ill-constructed *Pericles* can be, with little trouble, laid on the shoulders of another. But *Titus Andronicus*, which is a few years younger than Marlowe's popular *Jew of Malta*, was one of the best-paying productions of its day; and it is just the sort of piece the young Stratford would have been most likely to write. The reason for its success is not far to seek when one examines the quality and quantity of horror it offered the turbulent theatre-goer for whom it was put together. "But it is far too repulsive in plot and treatment," Mr. Sidney Lee avers, "to take rank with Shakespeare's acknowledged work." We need, indeed, not accept it as Shakespeare's simply because Meres, in 1598, said it was by him, or because it happened to be included in the Folio of 1623. There are per-

haps those who deem it unfortunate, but it is undeniable that the raw young man from Stratford came to London to make money; and it will take considerably more than any statement to the contrary of Edward Ravenscroft's to prove that William Shakespeare did not lend an eager quill to the shaping of the popular revenge-tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*.

II.

“While the principles of art are immutable,” says Lowell, in a discursive paper on *Swinburne's Tragedies*, “their application must accomodate itself to the material supplied them by the time and by the national character and traditions.” It is especially to the traditional materials of art and to the character of the public that we must look with sympathetic gaze if we are to deal seriously and broadly with the works of Marlowe or Shakespeare. Since in those days the stage was the sole means by which a man of letters could earn his precarious livelihood, it may not have been through any choice of his own that he addressed the mixed crowds which foregathered in the general playhouses; and, besides, in the reign of the Virgin Queen the vocation of playwright was not a highly honored profession. If Marlowe's public was less sensitive than we like to believe the Sophoclean audience was, and know Molière's playgoers to have been, it was surely superior to the uncouth, wooden-headed concourse for which Plautus wrote; and Lope de Vega's public, which flourished in much the same way as the pugnacious subjects of Elizabeth, is perhaps the nearest likeness we can draw. Bacon and Sidney could not permit themselves to find pleasure in ruthless blood-tragedies, though Sir Philip approved of the operose *Gorboduc* of Sackville and Norton. That the gallants of the Elizabethan audience, however, were not mentally of a very high type we learn from contemporaneous accounts of how they misbehaved themselves from their stools on the stage during the progress of the play. Very probably, their superior training was such as to enable them to perceive certain beauties forever veiled to the rabble, but for the most part, no doubt, the dandies joined the majority in its lusty approbation of fiery bombast and grim humor. About 1590, moreover, the public play-

houses were not nearly so popular with the gallants as they became a decade or so later; and the women in the theatre, when there were any, were not of good repute.

In the second act of Ben Jonson's *The Case is Altered*, Valentine summarily describes the audience of his time (1599) in these terms: "The people generally are very acceptive, and apt to applaud any meritable work, but there are two sorts of persons that most commonly are infectious to a whole auditory: one is the rude barbarous crew, a people that have no brains and yet grounded judgments; these will hiss anything that mounts above their grounded capacity. . . . And the capricious gallants have taken such a habit of dislike in all things that they will approve nothing, be it never so conceited or elaborate; but sit dispersed, making faces, and spitting." When Messrs. Seccombe and Allen tell us that "Marlowe pandered to that portion of the London crowd which rose at *Titus Andronicus*," it signifies nothing more, of course, than that the young playwright possessed, like Shakespeare, good common sense.

The proletarian mass, then, it was that a drama must please if it were to prove a success; and it was this quantity of barren spectators that the author of *The Jew of Malta* had constantly in mind. Fortunately for him and for us, Marlowe did not emulate Terence in ignoring the taste of his public. But for all their clamoring after "strutting and furious vociferation" (to borrow Jonson's characterization of the immensely popular *Tamburlaine*), they did not frown on any new variations or higher aspirations of the poet. They did not go to their *pleghis*, as Tolstoy went to the opera, with supersensitive conscience and hypercritical attitude.—

Wer den Dichter will verstehen,  
Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.

Marlowe's sturdy adherents were above all willing to play the game with the dramatic artist. Not knowing of anything else, they cared not if instead of graceful girls to enact their heroines they got awkward boys, and they had no quarrel because the platform used for the stage was bare of shiftable painted scenery; so long as they were at liberty to chat and reprehend, drink and eat, these 'penny' spectators in the 'yard' were quite content.

And if they took delight in the brutal bear-baiting, and were gruff and uncultured, they were also healthily fun-loving, open-minded, and not devoid of a robust, ready imagination.

### III.

"*The Merchant of Venice* was designed tragically by the author," said Rowe in 1709; and Dr. Furness is responsible for the declaration that "there is no ground for the belief that Shylock was ever presented on the stage in a comic light." Karl Mantzius, in his *History of Theatrical Art*, takes a rather naïve view. In Shakespeare's time, concludes the Danish actor, "Shylock was probably acted as it was written, neither comically nor tragically, or, as we may say in one word, humanly." It may not be amiss to recall to memory, then, since it appears so easily forgettable, that the Irishman, Macklin, was the first actor to play Shylock in a tragic key, and that his conception of the rôle was not disclosed until near the middle of the eighteenth century.

In an elegy on Burbage, the original Jew, who ranted fiercely in the part, Shylock is referred to as—

"the red-hair'd Jew,  
Which sought the bankrupt merchant's pound of flesh."

And in a ballad on *The Merchant of Venice*, by Thomas Jordan, an actor, published in 1664, Shylock is thus delineated:—

"His beard was red ; his face was made  
Not much unlike a witches,  
His chin turn'd up, his nose hung down,  
And both ends met together."

It would be unwise to attach to these allusions sufficient weight for reaching the conclusion that Shakespeare's Jew was not enacted very 'humanly' in the beginning of his career; but added to our knowledge of the customs of stage impersonation of the period and the clearly defined appetency of the Elizabethan playgoer, they come doubtless to possess a value beyond that of casual interest.

After the death of Burbage, in 1620, Shakespeare's play was not publicly performed till 1701, when the alteration by Baron

Lansdowne, with the comedian Thomas Dogget as Shylock, was put on at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. As it had become a matter of tradition that the impersonator of Shylock should wear a red wig, much surprise was manifested when the elder Kean, likely because he possessed no other, dressed the part in a black one. All of which goes to show that our Shylock has but little in common with the early Shylock, and that the sympathetic treatment the Jew received at the hands of Henry Irving would not long have been tolerated by the audience which gathered at the Globe. We may feel, with Professor A. W. Ward, safely convinced "that the sympathy aroused by Shylock is merely the result of the unconscious tact with which he was incidentally humanized by Shakespeare."

#### IV.

Before proceeding further I should perhaps admit to finding myself somewhat at variance with Professor Matthews's convenient theory of "the eternal verities of dramaturgy." In the main, of course, it is manifest enough that "the art of the drama has essential principles which are the same throughout the ages," but this dictum may be very easily driven to an uncritical extreme. On seeing *Œdipe-Roi*, as it is reverently given to-day at the Théâtre français, one cannot help realize,—recalling the while how far removed even this performance is from the representation at the immense, open-air theatre of Dionysus a score of centuries ago,—that here we are considering a phase of the art much differing, often substantially, from a contemporary rendering of, say, *Mid-Channel*, in London or New York.

Now, *The Jew of Malta* has its essential struggle (however arbitrary and absurd) just as *John Gabriel Borkman* has, but it is certainly not feasible unreservedly to gauge these plays by the selfsame criterion. Even the best of us, though we are seldom willing to own as much, are measurably bored by many circumstances attendant upon a present-day Shakespearean performance,—and that more especially, no doubt, at the simple, antiquated presentations of the Benson Players and of Mr. Ben Greet's Company. This is not of course to be marvelled at, since Shakespeare wrote for another kind of audience, a different school

of actors, and a theatre of a peculiar shape. Mr. Lang has his appreciable advantage in not seeing Shakespeare played, but his loss as critic, irrefragably, is much greater than his gain.

V.

In any careful examination of *The Jew of Malta* it is important to keep in mind at all times the life of its author. His brief career was a disordered one. He was master of arts, but his scholarship could scarce be called sound. He was ever daring and original in his endeavor; unlike his colleagues, he did not deign to borrow in his plays. Though not authoritative, there is no justifiable cause for doubting the report that he broke his leg while playing "in one lewd scene": he would have been that sort of actor. He was never "the gentle," but of a hot-blooded disposition, "threatening the world with high-astounding terms." He differed indeed from his most famous pupil almost to the degree that Faustus differs from Prospero. And down the centuries Shakespeare has been his worst enemy; commentators have found it seemingly impossible to refrain from invidious comparisons. Perchance some castigate the moon for not having the radiance of the sun; but there are those of us who can find pure beauty in the pale decreasing orb even at sunrise.

Many years since, Professor Dowden pointed out that Shakespeare, like Goethe, could stand aloof from his work, something that Marlowe, like Schiller, found impossible of accomplishment. Shakespeare is universal, platitudinized Richépin, in his preface to the French edition of Marlowe; but the author of *Faustus*, he went on, "tel du moins que le montre l'œuvre dramatique de sa vie si brève, est spécial à son temps. Ses héros en ont l'ardeur frénétique, le souffle furieux, la féroce et superbe audace d'ambition, de crime, de sacrilège, avec ce je ne sais quoi qui fait aimer les monstres quand ils sont beaux."

Marlowe and Shakespeare, then, except for their poetry — and they are of course both something more than poets — are essentially of an age. The terrible tragedy of Mrs. Siddons would hardly be endured by us in the same theatre with the exquisitely shaded emotional art of Mrs. Fiske, or Mrs. Campbell; yet we



have never hesitated to allow Sarah Siddons her place as one of the foremost tragediennes of all time. To some, I can well imagine, this exaltation of Marlowe as a playwright may appear to belittle his niche in the history of literature, but it seems, in our twentieth century, the only sane and fair way in which to appreciate his dramatic attributes.

## VI.

We have abundant proof that *The Jew of Malta* was an enormously popular piece. "Rd at the Jewe of maltuse, the 26 of febrearye 1591—l-s."—that is the first entry regarding Marlowe's play to be found in Henslowe's *Diary*. From this date until the fourteenth of May, 1596, *The Jew of Malta* is mentioned no fewer than thirty-five times. The last record of the play in the Henslowe manuscript runs as follows: "Lent unto the littell tayller, the same daye [19 May 1601] for more thinges for the Jewe of malta, some of X-s." In 1594 the popularity of Marlowe's piece was at its topmost; then the receipts begin to show a decline. Between April 7 and December 9 of this year it was performed thirteen times,—in the month of June alone four performances were given. This is a remarkable record for those days; the play was for a space the most lucrative piece in the crafty manager's repertory. During this period it had been performed by the Queen's Men (probably originally, Mr. Fleay suggests), by the Lord Strange's Company at the Rose, and then by Sussex's Players, and by the lord admiral's and the lord chamberlain's men. The drama was not published till 1633, after its revival at the Cockpit and presentation at court by Queen Henrietta's Men, with Richard Perkins in the name-part. This was more than two score years since the play was written.

In 1818 Kean appeared as Barabas at Drury Lane. At this revival of *The Jew of Malta*, which counted twelve performances, the Penley alteration was used. "Owing to Kean's exertions in Barabas," says Dyce, "it was very favorably received." But in an ingenuous anonymous biography of the actor, published in 1835, we find the following: "It was not likely to succeed, notwithstanding the tragedian added to the character a song, which he sang in a sweet and florid style. Kean's death, in

this play, was a fine piece of pantomimic acting. *The Jew of Malta* failed."

To enter into the interesting subject of the adventures of *The Jew of Malta* in Dutch, German, and French, is beyond the scope of this paper, but it may not be out of place briefly to indicate its early career in German garb. In Dresden, Herr Albrecht Wagner has recorded, the "Tragödie von Barabas, Juden von Malta" was played as early as 1626, and in Prague there was performed, in 1651, "ein Stück 'von dem reichen Juden von Maltua.'" In 1607-8, at Passau and Graz, pieces "von dem Juden" had been presented, but it is uncertain whether they had anything in common with Marlowe's *Jew*.

Marlowe's play has the predominant ingredients of the early Elizabethan drama, the 'ghost' alone being conspicuous by his absence; and it surpasses, in this way, everything that precedes it. *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Soliman and Perseda*, in which eighteen persons meet more or less violent deaths on the stage, are outdone, dramaturgically, in their own field by Marlowe's tragedy-of-blood. Barabas is more interesting and better equipped for his nefarious work than the magniloquent Tamburlaine before him. The Elizabethans delighted in the dominating personage, nearly omnipotent in his career; and the character of the Maltese Jew was never quite equalled in this respect by any of his contemporaries.

With Edward Alleyn, he of the thunderous voice and Olympic physique, to strut and bellow as Barabas, there is no cause for doubting that Marlowe's melodrama was about as thoroughly satisfactory stage entertainment as the Elizabethan knew. No one can gainsay that the theatre-goer who saw *The Jew of Malta* got full value for his money, and was justified in urging his friend and neighbor to see the play, if he considers for a few moments what Barabas accomplishes in the two hours' traffic of his stage. The interest in the Jew, as with his confrère, the Duke of Gloster, begins with the rise of the curtain on the first act, when he is discovered counting his gold, and from that instant the spectator's chief desire should be to witness, with bated breath, the flamboyant atrocities this knave takes such malignant satisfaction in perpetrating.

## VII.

From the crudest synopsis of events it becomes apparent that there is no want of strenuous action in *The Jew of Malta*, and that, first of all, is what Marlowe's spectators craved. Generally stated, the salient characteristics of the Elizabethan drama are these: absurd improbability and physical horror of story, non-development of character, lack of unity in plot, and incoherency of construction. These qualities the play we are considering to no little degree possesses, and we must not lose sight of the fact that by the stalwart theatre-goers of that age these qualities were not counted as faults. And to Professor Saintsbury's remark that "Marlowe was totally destitute of humor," we must make a kindred reservation; it is not hard to imagine with what roars and guffaws the boisterous Elizabethans, who, as Mr. John Corbin has pointed out, laughed at torture and insanity, greeted the last speech of the dying Barabas.

The arbitrary plot of the drama — and *The Jew of Malta* is not, like *Doctor Faustus*, which immediately precedes it, a mere sequence of scenes — is clearly set forth, still with an ample amount of elaboration to show up the flagitious malfeasance of the protagonist; and the action rises by leaps and bounds. After the first act, climax is piled upon climax; yet the final curtain falls with no weakening in the scheme of horrors. The scene (Act IV, first half) depicting the murder of Barnardine is one of the most remarkable bits of its kind to be found in dramatic literature. The fable is preposterous, of course; but, for the matter of that, what boy, after Eton, is credulous enough to take seriously the stories of the three caskets and the pound of flesh? The play is well-nigh devoid of any true characterization. Ithamore, drawn in blackest black, and pitiable Abigail are bare sketches; they serve their purpose only as they are acted upon by their lord and master. The poetry, heavy at times, is often suggestive and picturesque, and it is nearly always admirably adapted to the human voice. In fine, as Hazlitt said of *Every Man in his Humor*, "this play acts better than it reads."

VIII.

The majority of critics, as we know (Lowell being the brilliant exception), agree that the first two acts of *The Jew of Malta* are measurably superior to those succeeding, their allegation being based, of course, upon the conduct of the protagonist. Dyce and Symonds, among others, account for this by assuming that the play was finished under high pressure. Hallam considers the first two acts to be "more vigorously conceived than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare;" but adds that "the latter acts are a tissue of uninteresting crimes and slaughter." The habitu  of the Rose Playhouse, we may be certain, would have objected to the 'uninteresting.' Dr. Ward is willing to believe, and Dr. Lee concurs with him, that "the grosser portions of the last three acts are due to later insertions by other hands." Again it behoves us only to ratiocinate congruously — to keep steadfastly in view Marlowe's "fine madness" and a right appreciation of "the swelling bombast" of his earlier work. These rough portions stamp *The Jew of Malta*, were we not otherwise sure of it, as Marlowe's own.

"Why the poet," asks Mr. A. H. Bullen, "who started with such clear-eyed vision and stern resolution, swerved so blindly and helplessly from the path, is a question that may well perplex critics. Was the artist's hand paralysed by the consciousness of an inability to work out in detail the great conception? . . . . It is a sheer impossibility to believe that the play in its present form represents the poet's finished work." It is quite safe to say that Marlowe's hand was not 'paralysed' during the execution of the latter part of his most successful play, and it is not unreasonable to assume that the natural pressure under which the piece was to all appearances completed finds its cause in the dramatist's obvious method of application to his task. As certain incongruities of 'comic relief' in *Faustus* meanfully strike a careful observer, so the magnificent insouciance of these latter acts tends only to make *The Jew of Malta* more thoroughly and completely Marlowesque. Such anile lapses, however, are not infrequent in our superabundant comment on Elizabethan literature. Coleridge even believed that the Porter's speech, during

the knocking, in *Macbeth* was inserted by a colleague of Shakespeare's to indulge the rabble!

It is true that we can have no sympathy with Barabas after the second act, that he is transformed into a monstrosity, a caricature, perhaps; but I have yet to find anything in this sense worse than his inventory of villainies in the first part of the play. It may be that the beginning of *The Jew of Malta* is a bit too advanced in artistry for a revenge-tragedy. Marlowe probably checked himself with something like Aristotle's 'practical direction' to the effect that the tragic poet "should put himself as much as possible in the place of a spectator." In any case, it is certain that the Elizabethans derived no less pleasure — and the likely chances are that they derived more — from the latter part of his play than from its former half.

## IX.

The unique personality has always prospered in the world of the theatre. Medea is an extraordinary woman, and so is Phèdre, and Hedda Gabler; Jaffeir, Wallenstein, and Cyrano de Bergerac stand out from the crowd both in potentiality and idiosyncrasy: and so with the Jew of Malta. Only, the Elizabethans were not content with any mild or commonplace deviations from normality, and therefore Marlowe had to impel the aberrations of Barabas to the utmost extreme. It has been as unfair of critics as it is absurd to measure him within a tragic rule. The red nose the actors wore in the rôle is mentioned in Rowe's *Search for Money*, which appeared over a score of years after *The Jew of Malta* had been produced. That nose must have been the talk of the town for many a moon. On one occasion, Ithamore says to his master — "God-a-mercy, Nose, come let's be gone!" and on another, he exclaims — "O, brave, master! I worship your nose for this." And in the third act the slave is in all likelihood the voice of his audience when he speaks to Abigail of her father in these flattering terms: "O mistress, ha, ha, ha! O my master! I have the bravest, gravest, secret, subtle, bottle-nosed knave to my master, that ever gentleman had."

Barabas has been maltreated in various ways, misconceived and misleading. To Swinburne he was "a mere mouthpiece for

the utterance of poetry as magnificent as any but the best of Shakespeare's." Lamb and Collier dismiss the Jew with the same phrase — to them he is "a mere monster." He is brought in, continues Elia, "with a large painted nose to please the rabble." Lowell calls Barabas "shocking and not terrible," adding that "Shakespeare makes no such mistake with Shylock;" and Dr. Brandes expresses an opinion of like tenor. Is it not dramaturgically consistent that the villain, if he is heroic in his villainy, should not be quite so base during the first two acts as in the succeeding three? I think the difference between the early and the later Barabas is more of degree than of kind. The playwright at no time deviates from his plan. There is no concealment about the Jew's malignancy; he claims kinship, not with Tartuffe, but with Iago.

There is a certain morbid, and possibly ludicrous, fascination about the ingenuous miscreant. He is a rare being, "fram'd of finer mould than common men,"—and his favorite word is 'cunning.' At his surprise because Ithamore had brought a ladle along with the pot of rice he had been sent for, the slave explains: "Yes, sir; the proverb says, he that eats with the devil had need of a long spoon; I have brought you a ladle." To the Elizabethans this reply by Ithamore seemed rather facetious. Lowell said once that "there is no resemblance between the Jew of Malta and the Jew of Venice, except that both have daughters whom they love,"—and perhaps it would be unprofitable to pursue the investigation further.

There were not a great number of Jews in London at this time, but, so far as we know, they were generally held in antipathy. The similarity between the Maltese Jew and the successful Portuguese, Juan Miquez (Josef Nassi) of history, suggested by Herr Leon Kellner, though striking and interesting, is of nugatory significance in any study of the play as a play. Wherever the germ may have come from, this character is the child of the dramatist's brain. Marlowe could not of course have done better than to make his hero a Jew and to give him the name of Barabas.

Machiavel, who makes his first appearance in our dramatic literature in this piece, is the sponsor for the protagonist, and

in the prologue he requests that Barabas be not "entertained the worse because he favors me." But the Elizabethans, we know, had a most perverted conception of the Italian politician. Mr. Edward Meyer, in his little volume on *Machiavelli and the English Drama*, maintains "that had the *Principe* never been written, Marlowe's three great heroes would not have been drawn with such gigantic strokes." The inspiration for Barabas, this scholar surmises, was found in Patericke's translation of Gentillet's *Anti-Medieval*. In the body of *The Jew of Malta* there is no direct borrowing from the writings of the Florentine, and in the prologue there are but two expressions drawn from him.

Professor Ward fancies that "haste of execution was the chief cause which prevented Marlowe from achieving a character instead of a caricature." Keeping to the front in our consideration, however, the temperament and youth of Marlowe (he was but twenty-five when creating the Jew), we find that it does not necessarily follow that this was the reason for Barabas becoming what he did. And we must not overlook the circumstance that, like Tamburlaine, this rôle was designed for the great tragedian, Alleyn; it was he who was to make the play successful. Moreover, and what is of deeper consequence, the Jew becomes what he is, as the lascivious Friars are what they are, primarily because of the demands of the spectators for whom he was drawn. In this M. Félix Rabbe, the French translator of Marlowe, concurs: "Marlowe abandonnait son Juif aux passions de son public: il le faisait, comme le voulait et comme le voudra longtemps encore la tradition théâtrale, un fantoche à la fois odieux et grotesque."

## X.

Hazlitt said that *The Jew of Malta* was "extreme in act and outrageous in plot and catastrophe," and Lowell agreed with this view when he defined its hero as "the mere lunacy of dis-tempered imagination." Genest was truly not captious in his naïve summary. "There are some strange things in this play," he wrote, "but on the whole it is a fine tragedy." A German scholar, Herr E. Mory, has written a treatise on *Marlowe's Jude von Malta und Shakspeare's Kaufmann von Venedig*, extolling

how facilely, in psychology of character and poetic execution, the Swan of Avon overrides his ill-starred precursor; and with him, of course, there should not be any quarrel.

In any profitable consideration of *The Jew of Malta*, it behoves us to base our judgment, as Lowell put it, “not on proof that a work possesses some of the qualities of another whose greatness is acknowledged, but on the immediate feeling that it carries to a high point of perfection certain qualities proper to itself.” To the playgoers of the last decade of the sixteenth century Marlowe’s melodrama, giving them in turbulent action just the sort of aggrandized ideas they most delighted in, seemed a thing of great beauty. And we may be quite certain that, in those exuberant days, *The Jew of Malta* was awaited and welcomed at the theatre with no less avidity than *The Merchant of Venice*.

ARTHUR SWAN.

New York City.